

Message Text

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SUBJECT: 30TH UNGA -- GENERAL DEBATE SPEECH BY THE FOREIGN
MINISTER OF SINGAPORE, S. RAJARATNAM

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM, DEVOTING HIS
SPEECH TO AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE UN AND PRO-
POSALS FOR ITS REVITALIZATION, CALLED FOR A RECOGNITION
OF GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE TO REPLACE THE 17TH CENTURY
MIND SET OF MANY MEMBERS, INCLUDING SOME IN THE THIRD
WORLD. HE CRITICIZED THE PREVAILING IDEOLOGY, COMPLAINING
THAT SOME THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES "HAVE TAKEN TO XENOPHOBIC
NATIONALISM AND THE RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS ARROGANCE
ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR FORMER RULERS," AND ADVANCED TWO
GUIDELINES TO FOSTER A NEW APPROACH IN THE UN TO WORLD
AFFAIRS. HE PROPOSED THAT PROBLEM-SOLVING REPLACE "THE
OLD CONCEPT OF USING THIS ORGANIZATION AS AN ARENA FOR
STAGING CONTESTS," AND THAT CONSENSUS REPLACE "THE
INCREASINGLY SUSPECT" PRINCIPLE OF MAJORITY VOTE. HE
CONCLUDED BY ELABORATING ONE OF THE STRUCTURAL REFORM
PROPOSALS ADVANCED IN THE UN GROUP OF EXPERTS REPORT
AND SUGGESTED FOUR "RULES" TO PROMOTE GENUINE
NEGOTIATIONS IN THE PROPOSED "SMALL NEGOTIATING GROUPS."
END SUMMARY.

2. THE BASIC PROBLEM OF THE UN STEMMED NOT FROM
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FAILURES OF MACHINERY, BUT FROM THE "SUM OF OUR OWN

FAILURES;" THE PROBLEM WAS MORE IDEOLOGICAL THAN STRUCTURAL. THE OUTLOOK AND POLICIES OF MANY MEMBERS IN THE UN WERE STILL GOVERNED BY A 17TH CENTURY IDEOLOGY CHARACTERIZED BY A "XENOPHOBIC NATIONALISM" THAT WAS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD. RAJARATNAM WAS ESPECIALLY DISTRESSED THAT SOME THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES "HAVE TAKEN TO XENOPHOBIC NATIONALISM AND THE RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS ARROGANCE ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR FORMER WESTERN RULERS" AND HE COMPLAINED OF "THE GROWING ARROGANCE OF THE WEAK" AS WELL AS OF "THE POWERFUL."

3. STRESSING THAT UN ACHIEVEMENTS IN DECOLONIZATION AND IN INCULCATING "THE HABIT OF DISCUSSION AND COOPERATION" DEMONSTRATED THE CONTINUED VALUE OF THE INSTITUTION RAJARATNAM URGED "FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THE INTELLECTUAL, MORAL, AND EMOTIONAL APPROACH TO WORLD PROBLEMS" ON THE PART OF UN MEMBERS. REVITALIZATION OF THE UN SHOULD BE BASED ON A RECOGNITION "THAT WE ARE MOVING TOWARD A GLOBAL COMMUNITY" AND A COMMITMENT TO MAKE THE UN "THE INSTRUMENT FOR THE PLANNED NURTURING AND DIRECTION OF A GLOBAL COMMUNITY WHICH WE ARE NOW CREATING IN AN UNPLANNED AND UNPURPOSEFUL MANNER," TO FOSTER THIS PROCESS, RAJARATNAM ADVANCED TWO GUIDELINES. FIRST, CONSTRUCTIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING MUST REPLACE THE OLD PRACTICE, INITIATED DURING THE COLD WAR BY THE GREAT POWERS, "OF USING THIS ORGANIZATION AS AN ARENA FOR STAGING CONTESTS AND CONFRONTATIONS FOR THE EDIFICATION OF OUR HOME AUDIENCES" SECOND, CONSENSUS MUST REPLACE THE "INCREASINGLY SUSPECT" PRINCIPLE OF MAJORITY VOTE, WHICH HAS OFTEN PREVENTED PROBLEMS FROM BEING DECIDED ON THEIR MERITS AND SERVED MERELY TO STAGE "CONFRONTATION FOR THE HUMILIATION OF OPPONENTS." RAJARATNAM BELIEVED THAT THE UN WAS NOT YET READY TO BE GOVERNED BY MAJORITY VOTE: "THE MINORITY HAVE YET TO BE SATISFIED THAT MAJORITY DECISIONS WILL BE ARRIVED AT WITH JUDICIAL IMPARTIALITY AND THAT MAJORITY DECISIONS ARE MADE BY MEN OF VIRTUE AND NOT BY A KANGAROO COURT."

4. RAJARATNAM HIGHLIGHTED A PROPOSAL FOR STRUCTURAL UNCLASSIFIED

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REFORM SUGGESTED BY THE UN GROUP OF EXPERTS REPORT THAT WOULD ENABLE THE UN TO FULFILL MORE EFFECTIVELY ITS GLOBAL ROLE. HE SET FORTH RULES FOR CREATING SMALL NEGOTIATING GROUPS ON SPECIFIC ISSUES AND SPELLED OUT THEIR AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY, THEIR DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER UN ORGANS. HE SUPPLEMENTED THESE CONSULTATIVE PROCEDURES PROPOSED BY THE UN GROUP OF EXPERTS WITH FOUR RULES FOR

NEGOTIATION. THESE RULES WERE: "ONE MUST EXAMINE
THE MOST CONSTRUCTIVE PROPOSALS THE OPPONENT OFFERS;"
"ONE SHOULD NOT SEEK SUPERIORITY;" "NO PARTY TO A
NEGOTIATION MUST DEMAND TO SATISFY ALL ITS DEMANDS;"
AND "EVERY COUNTRY HAS A CERTAIN IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM
NATIONAL INTEREST."
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